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LAST RITES!
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ABOUT

MAVERICK

Clandestine warfare is a wildly unpredictable and dangerous game. For **Maverick,** it is a way of life.

A master in the deadly art of espionage, his unique mutant physiology and state-of-the-art weapons arsenal have become his stock-in-trade.

Currently suffering the effects of a terminal illness which is slowly consuming his body from within, Maverick is living proof that one's control over one's destiny is somewhat limited at best.

Haunted by his past. Hunted by his foes. Betrayed by his own body. In many ways, Maverick has good reason to fear life more than he does death.

Yet still he clings to life, all the while struggling to fill the little time he has left with some sense of purpose. Especially now that he has finally found a family to call his own— a testament to the fact that the ties that bind are often forged in the face of great adversity.

MAVERICK

A former CIA operative working for Team-X, David North became a mercenary for hire who goes by the moniker Maverick. Since then, he has specialized in the dirty jobs that no one else wants to do yet desperately need doing, using his mutant power to absorb and rechannel kinetic impact at will. Infected with the Legacy Virus and faced with an uncertain future, Maverick has no way of knowing what will kill him first: his many enemies... or his own body.

CHRIS BRADLEY

At sixteen, Christopher Bradley learned he was a mutant and that he had contracted the Legacy Virus. Maverick arranged for Chris and his family to be relocated after anti-mutant violence destroyed their home. Though Chris possesses the ability to emit electrically-charged bursts of energy, his control over these powers is becoming increasingly erratic as his condition worsens.

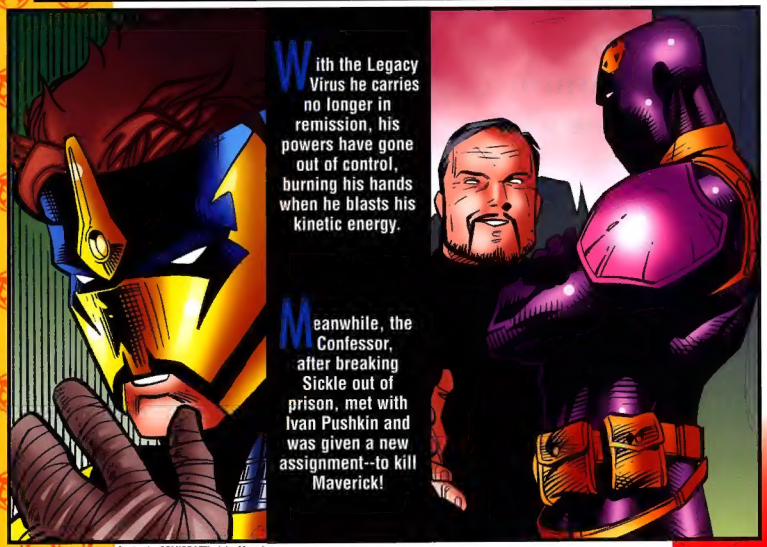
THE CONFESSOR

The Russian mercenary whose weapons have a decidedly religious theme, the Confessor's past involvment with Maverick is as mysterious as his identity.

PREVIOUSLY IN

MAVERICK

Maverick kept vigil at Elena's bedside, who's encounter with Sabretooth had left her in a coma, severing their psychic bond.



With the Legacy Virus he carries no longer in remission, his powers have gone out of control, burning his hands when he blasts his kinetic energy.

Meanwhile, the Confessor, after breaking Sickle out of prison, met with Ivan Pushkin and was given a new assignment--to kill Maverick!

Design by COMICRAFT's John Marasigan

THE WALL

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JIM CHEUNG — PENCILER
ANDREW PEPOY — INKER
CHRIS ELIOPOULOS, VIRTUAL CALLIGRAPHY — LETTERER
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IT APPEARS THAT ALL YOUR SINS HAVE FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH YOU!
UUURRK--!
FISTS... SHOULD'VE CHARGED-UP... FROM THAT BLOW...
HUUF--!
WITHOUT 'EM...
...I'M TOAST...!
...

PARIS, FRANCE. A DAY EARLIER, AT THE ELEGANT APARTMENT HOUSE OF A VERY DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN...
MONSIEUR VIVANT WILL SEE YOU NOW, SIR.
HELLO, JEAN LUC.
WELL, WELL. LOOK WHO'S HONORING ME WITH HIS PRESENCE.
I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW SHOCKED I WAS WHEN I GOT YOUR MESSAGE.
WOULD YOU CARE FOR A BRANDY ...?
NO, THANKS. I CAN SEE BY YOUR TONE THAT YOU STILL HARBOR A LOT OF RESENTMENT TOWARDS ME--SO I'LL KEEP THIS SHORT.
I...I'M HERE TO ASK FOR A FAVOR.
IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF NOT SEEING OR SPEAKING TO EACH OTHER, YOU HAVE THE AUDACITY TO SHOW UP HERE AND ASK FOR A FAVOR?
FROM ME?!

AFTER WHAT YOU COST ME?!

GET AWAY--! DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH ME! I'M NOT SOME HELPLESS INVALID!

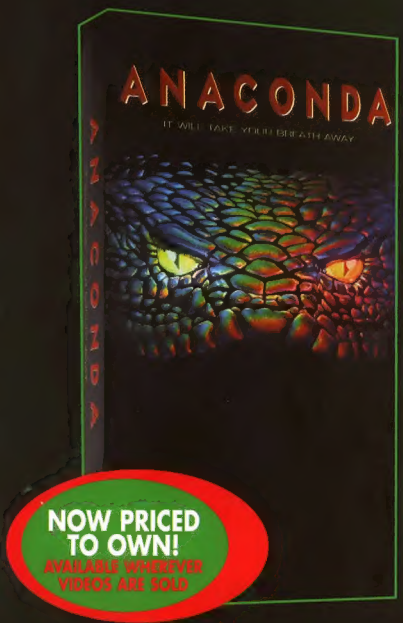
I DON'T---¿UMMMF¿---NEED YOUR PITY. AND CERTAINLY --¿NNN¿-- NOT YOUR ASSISTANCE.
WHATEVER ELSE YOU MAY HAVE DEPRIVED ME OF--I STILL HAVE MY PRIDE AND SELF-RESPECT. AND THOSE ARE THINGS YOU CAN NEVER TAKE AWAY!

YOU'VE ALREADY DESTROYED MY LIFE. ARE YOU HERE TO RUB MY NOSE IN IT AS WELL?
OF COURSE NOT.
IT'S JUST IMPORTANT THAT I GET SOME INFORMATION ABOUT GINETTA AND MAJOR BARRINGTON.

OTHER THAN MYSELF, YOU'RE THE ONLY OTHER LIVING PERSON WHO KNEW BOTH OF THEM WELL ENOUGH TO TELL ME WHAT I NEED TO KNOW.
THE ONLY ONE WHO GOT TO SEE THEM INTERACTING WHILE I WASN'T PRESENT ...
JUST EXACTLY WHAT ARE YOU ASKING ME?

"ANACONDA

is like 'Jaws' on the Amazon River. It's the best creepy, crawly creature feature in years."
Susan Granger, SSG SYNDICATE



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ICE CUBE

JON VOIGHT

ERIC STOLTZ

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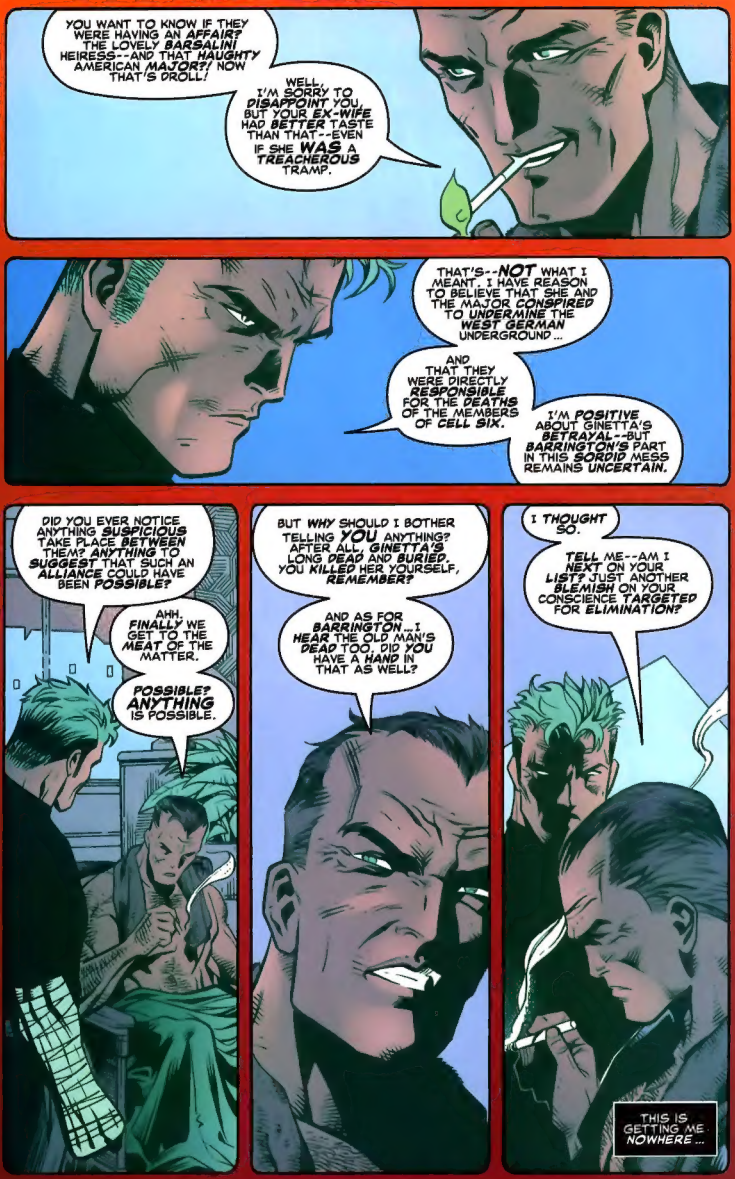
YOU WANT TO KNOW IF THEY WERE HAVING AN AFFAIR? THE LOVELY BARSALINI HEIRESS--AND THAT HAUGHTY AMERICAN MAJOR? NOW THAT'S DROLL!
WELL, I'M SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, BUT YOUR EX-WIFE HAD BETTER TASTE THAN THAT--EVEN IF SHE WAS A TREACHEROUS TRAMP.
THAT'S--NOT WHAT I MEANT. I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SHE AND THE MAJOR CONSPIRED TO UNDERMINE THE WEST GERMAN UNDERGROUND...
AND THAT THEY WERE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF THE MEMBERS OF CELL SIX.
I'M POSITIVE ABOUT GINETTA'S BETRAYAL--BUT BARRINGTON'S PART IN THIS SORDID MESS REMAINS UNCERTAIN.
DID YOU EVER NOTICE ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS TAKE PLACE BETWEEN THEM? ANYTHING TO SUGGEST THAT SUCH AN ALLIANCE COULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE?
AHH. FINALLY WE GET TO THE MEAT OF THE MATTER.
POSSIBLE? ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.
BUT WHY SHOULD I BOTHER TELLING YOU ANYTHING? AFTER ALL, GINETTA'S LONG DEAD AND BURIED. YOU KILLED HER YOURSELF, REMEMBER?
AND AS FOR BARRINGTON--I HEAR THE OLD MAN'S DEAD TOO, DID YOU HAVE A HAND IN THAT AS WELL?
I THOUGHT SO.
TELL ME--AM I NEXT ON YOUR LIST? JUST ANOTHER BLEMISH ON YOUR CONSCIENCE TARGETED FOR ELIMINATION?
THIS IS GETTING ME NOWHERE...

EAST COAST COMICS

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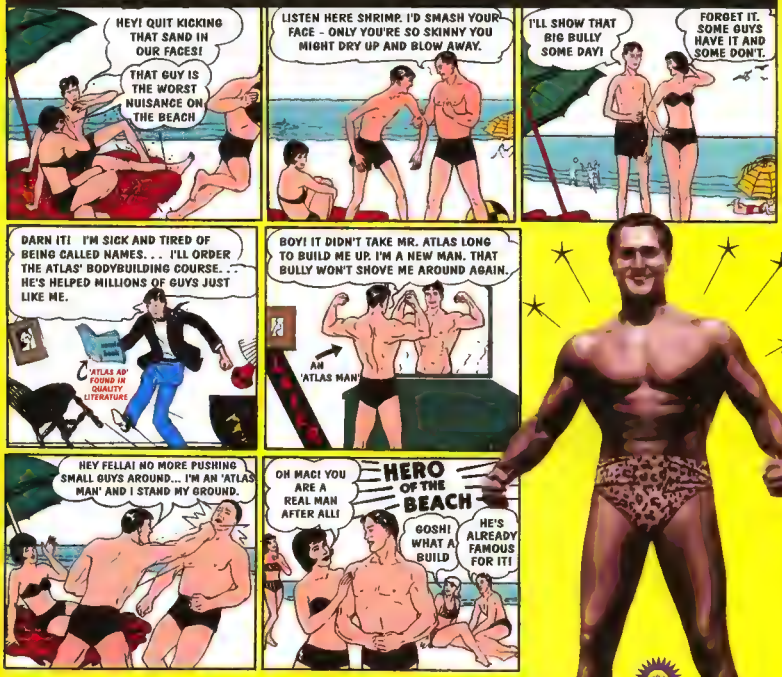
JEAN LUC, I LOOK, I DIDN'T COME HERE TO ARGUE.
GRANTED--MY MOTIVES AREN'T EXACTLY SELFLESS, BUT I DO WANT TO MAKE PEACE, FOR BOTH OUR SAKES.
HOW GRACIOUS OF YOU--CONSIDERING THAT I'M THE ONE WHO ENDED UP PARALYZED FROM THE WAIST DOWN THANKS TO YOUR CARELESSNESS!
I'M SORRY. I KNOW YOU'RE FURIOUS WITH ME--I PROBABLY WOULD BE TOO UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES...
BUT WE WERE GOOD FRIENDS ONCE.
EVEN MADE YOU BEST MAN AT MY WEDDING BECAUSE YOU'D ALWAYS BEEN MORE LIKE A BROTHER TO ME THAN MY REAL FAMILY EVER WAS.
DOESN'T THAT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU? ARE YOU WILLING TO THROW ALL THAT AWAY?!
YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF GALL, CHRISTOPH--I'LL GIVE YOU THAT. YOU MUST BE TRULY DESPERATE TO COME TO ME FOR HELP.
BUT DON'T ADD INSULT TO INJURY WITH SUCH SENTIMENTAL DRIVEL. WHATEVER FELLOWSHIP I FELT FOR YOU DIED A LONG, LONG TIME AGO.
YOU WANNA SEE ME BEG. IS THAT IT?
PERSONALLY, I FIND GROVELLING OFFENSIVE. AND FUN AS IT MAY BE TO WATCH YOU SQUIRM--
--I SHOULD WARN YOU THAT YOU DON'T STAND A CHANCE IN HADES OF EVER INGRATIATING YOURSELF BACK INTO MY GOOD GRACES.
GLAD TO HEAR IT--SINCE THAT WAS NEVER MY INTENT.
SO DON'T FLATTER YOURSELF IF YOU THINK MY GUILT OVER WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU CONSUMES MY EVERY WAKING THOUGHT.
DESPITE HOW MUCH YOU MAY WANT TO CAST THE BLAME ON ME, THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT YOUR ACCIDENT WAS JUST THAT--AN ACCIDENT.

MY, MY, NOW THAT'S CHEEKY. I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THAT YOU'VE BECOME AWFULLY SMUG IN YOUR OLD AGE, 'OLD BOY.'
AND YOU'VE BECOME A BITTER, SELF-INDULGENT BOOR.
WELL, THEN. SINCE I THINK WE BOTH CAN AGREE THAT OUR RELATIONSHIP HAS PATHETICALLY DETERIORATED TO NOTHING MORE THAN PETTY REMARKS AND HOLLOW GESTURES--
--I SUGGEST WE SPARE OURSELVES ANY FURTHER INDIGNITIES AND PUT AN END TO THIS LITTLE INTERVIEW BEFORE THINGS GET ANY UGLIER.
TSSS
YOU KNOW, I'D HAVE BEEN WILLING TO MAKE AN EFFORT IF I THOUGHT THERE WAS EVEN THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE OF SALVAGING SOMETHING--ANYTHING--OUT OF THE FRIENDSHIP WE ONCE SHARED.
BUT IF IT'S SO INCONCEIVABLE FOR YOU TO LET GO OF THE PAST--THEN TOBLAZES WITH YOU!
DON'T DELUDE YOURSELF, CHRISTOPH. THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S CLINGING TO THE PAST--NOT ME. I'M SIMPLY TRAPPED IN IT.
AND THANKS TO YOU, I CAN NEVER ESCAPE.
SO CONSIDER YOURSELF FORTUNATE TO HAVE THE LUXURY OF CHOICE AND JUST GET THE HELL OUT OF MY LIFE. AND THIS TIME STAY OUT!

'HOTEL DE CRILLON--A FORMER PRIVATE PALACE BUILT IN THE 18TH CENTURY.
THESE DAYS, ITS CLIENTELE CONSISTS MAINLY OF VISITING DIGNITARIES AND THE FILTHY RICH--WITH OCCASIONAL EXCEPTIONS...
WHAT A WASTE OF TIME. I SHOULD'VE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO--
EH? WHAT'S THAT ON THE BED...?
WHOA. I DON'T BELIEVE IT. IT'S FROM THE CONFESSOR!
The wall. Midnight tomorrow. Saint Augustine's Church.
SAINT AUGUSTINE'S?! THAT WAS ONE OF CELL SIX'S OLD MEETING SPOTS... BEFORE THEY WERE SLAUGHTERED...
I HAD NO IDEA THAT THE CONFESSOR WAS STILL ACTIVE. HOW THE HECK DID HE KNOW I WAS HERE?
AND HOW DID HE LEARN SO MUCH ABOUT CELL SIX?! OUR USE OF SAINT AUGUSTINE'S WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A WELL-KEPT SECRET!
IF THE CONFESSOR'S ACHIN' FOR A CONFRONTATION--HE JUST PUSHED ALL THE RIGHT BUTTONS. I WANT ANSWERS. AND I WON'T BE DENIED.
WHATEVER SICK GAME MY OLD FOE'S PLAYING--I'M PUTTING A STOP TO IT!

TIRED OF BEING PICKED ON?
NOBODY PICKS ON AN "ATLAS MAN!"


HEY! QUIT KICKING THAT SAND IN OUR FACES!
THAT GUY IS THE WORST NUISANCE ON THE BEACH
LISTEN HERE SHRIMP. I'D SMASH YOUR FACE - ONLY YOU'RE SO SKINNY YOU MIGHT DRY UP AND BLOW AWAY.
I'LL SHOW THAT BIG BULLY SOME DAY!
FORGET IT. SOME GUYS HAVE IT AND SOME DON'T.
DARN IT! I'M SICK AND TIRED OF BEING CALLED NAMES. . . I'LL ORDER THE ATLAS' BODYBUILDING COURSE. . . HE'S HELPED MILLIONS OF GUYS JUST LIKE ME.
'ATLAS AD' FOUND IN QUALITY LITERATURE
BOY! IT DIDN'T TAKE MR. ATLAS LONG TO BUILD ME UP. I'M A NEW MAN. THAT BULLY WON'T SHOVE ME AROUND AGAIN.
AM 'ATLAS MAN'
HEY FELLA! NO MORE PUSHING SMALL GUYS AROUND... I'M AN 'ATLAS MAN' AND I STAND MY GROUND.
OH MAC! YOU ARE A REAL MAN AFTER ALL!
HERO OF THE BEACH
GOSH! WHAT A BUILD
HE'S ALREADY FAMOUS FOR IT!

I WAS PICKED ON TOO - NOT ANYMORE!

That's right fellas, I understand how it feels to be **"picked on."** I was a skinny "97-pound weakling." I was so ashamed of my scrawny body that I dreaded being seen in a swim suit or going to the gym. The girls wouldn't look at me and the guys gave me no respect. That all changed for me, and I'll change it for you. I'll make you an **"Atlas Man."** I will build you a massive muscular body to impress the girls and stop the bullies! **You have my word on that!**

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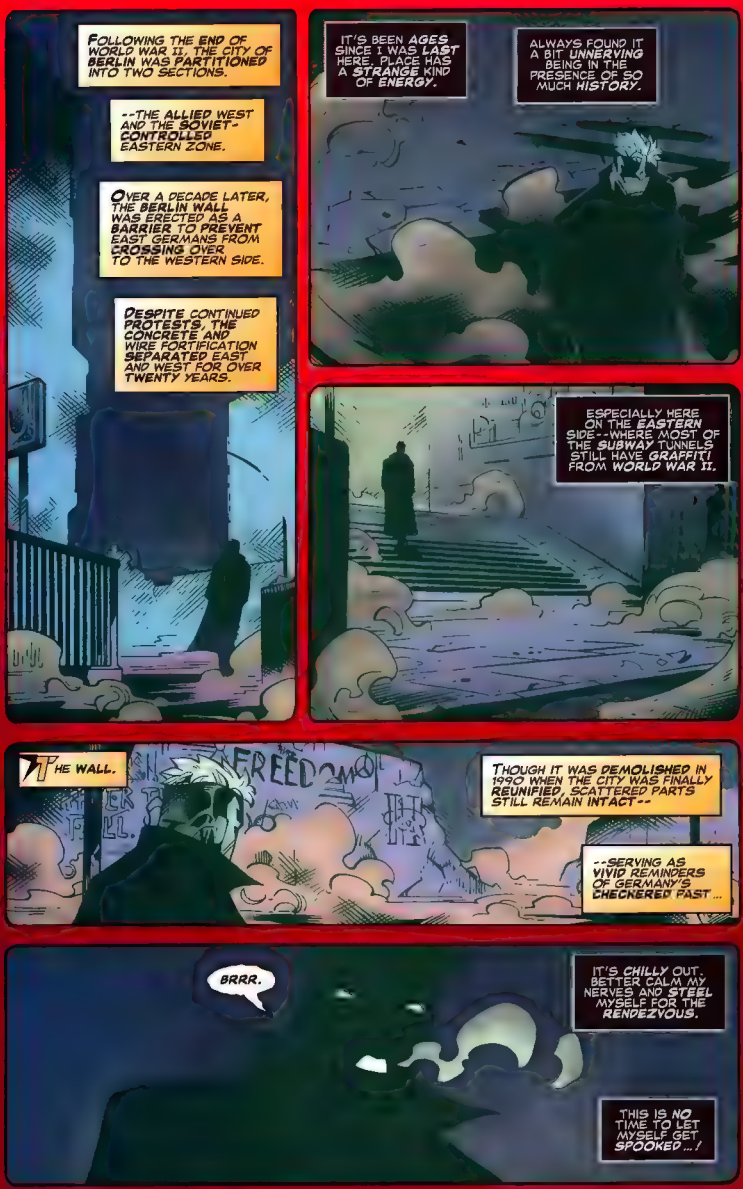
The Surgeon General has determined that lack of physical exercise is detrimental to your health.


Following the end of World War II, the city of Berlin was partitioned into two sections.
--the Allied West and the Soviet-controlled Eastern zone.
Over a decade later, the Berlin Wall was erected as a barrier to prevent East Germans from crossing over to the Western side.
Despite continued protests, the concrete and wire fortification separated East and West for over twenty years.
It's been ages since I was last here. Place has a strange kind of energy.
Always found it a bit unnerving being in the presence of so much history.
Especially here on the Eastern side--where most of the subway tunnels still have graffiti from World War II.
The wall.
Though it was demolished in 1990 when the city was finally reunified, scattered parts still remain intact--
--serving as vivid reminders of Germany's checkered past...
brrr.
It's chilly out. Better calm my nerves and steel myself for the rendezvous.
This is no time to let myself get spooked...!

2400 HOURS.
I'M HERE, CONFESSOR. LET'S FORGO THE IDLE CHITCHAT AND GET TO THE POINT OF THIS LATEST CHARADE OF YOURS.
AS YOU WISH, SINNER.
WELL. WHAT DO YOU KNOW--RIGHT ON CUE.
HIS HEAD ON A PLATTER SHOULD FETCH A HEFTY BOUNTY AFTER I'M THROUGH WITH HIM...
TIME FOR PENANCE!
FRSST
FRSST
FRSST

BLASTED COAT-- SLOWING ME DOWN. SHOULD'VE DITCHED IT THE MOMENT I GOT HERE--!
FROST
FROST
FROST
FROST
FROST
SHUKT
AAARG!
I'M HIT--!
SERVES ME RIGHT FOR GETTING COCKY. MADE ME CARELESS. ASSUMED THOSE BOLTS WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO PIERCE MY BODY ARMOR...
...THANKFULLY...
SHRRIP!
NNNG!
...IT'S ONLY A FLESH WOUND...

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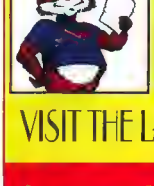

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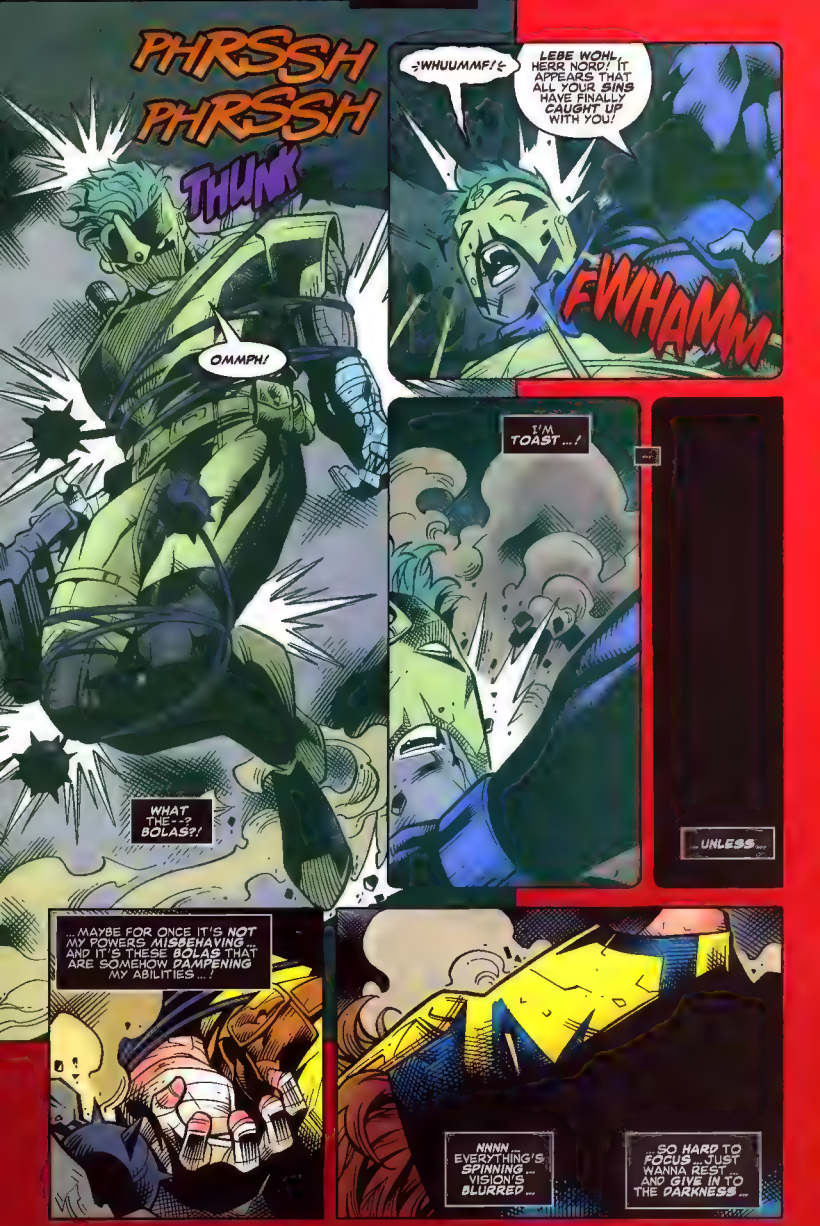
PHRSSH
PHRSSH
THUNK
OMMPH!
WHAT THE--? BOLAS?!
;WHUUMMF!;
LEBE WOHL, HERR NORD! IT APPEARS THAT ALL YOUR SINS HAVE FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH YOU!
FWHAMM
I'M TOAST...!
...UNLESS...
...MAYBE FOR ONCE IT'S NOT MY POWERS MISBEHAVING... AND IT'S THESE BOLAS THAT ARE SOMEHOW DAMPENING MY ABILITIES...!
NNNN... EVERYTHING'S SPINNING... VISION'S BLURRED...
SO HARD TO FOCUS... JUST WANNA REST... AND GIVE IN TO THE DARKNESS...

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7784 Prodigy
7836 Puff Daddy
1832 Queensryche
7531 R. Kelly
7232 Radiohead
7242 Rage Against the Machine
7294 Ramones
7383 R. E. M.
7732 Red Hot Chili Peppers
7651 Rolling Stones
8354 Sarah McLachlan
7258 Savage Garden
7453 Silverchair
7475 Sister Hazel
7523 Slaughter
7524 Slayer
7621 Smashing Pumpkins
7624 Smashmouth
7147 Spice Girls
8863 Stone Temple Pilots
7843 Sugar Ray
8521 TLC
2784 Toni Braxton
8862 Tool
2957 Tool Amos
8971 **Type O Negative**
8221 U2
8262 Van Halen
8374 Vonda Sell
8373 Verve Pipe
8481 Violent Femmes
8254 Wallflowers
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8441 White Zombie
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7452 **Alicia Silverstone**
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2381 Beverly Hills 90210
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...NO--! FIGHT IT!
HAVE TO... STAY CONSCIOUS... LONG ENOUGH...
...TO CONFIRM MY THEORY... AND GIVE IT ONE LAST SHOT--!
SMRAKT
THE BOLAS' SENSITIVE INNER CIRCUITS SHATTER ON IMPACT--INSTANTLY SHORTING OUT THE SMALL DAMPENING FIELDS THEY WERE EMITTING--
--WHICH IN TURN CAUSES MAVERICK'S POWERS TO SUDDENLY FLARE UP--WITH A VENGEANCE!
TSSS
ZRARK
AAARG--!

NNNNN! GOTTA BLOCK THE PAIN. BURNING HANDS ARE A SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR FREEDOM--
--AND THE CHANCE TO PUT THIS CREEP OUT OF COMMISSION--
--PERMANENTLY!
WHABAM
KASSHH
IMPRESSIVE. YOUR WILL IS INDEED MORE INDOMITABLE THAN I REMEMBER, MAVERICK.
A SHAME THAT YOUR OWN BODY WILL BETRAY YOU IN THE END...
WHATEVER YOU'RE BLABBERING ABOUT, CONFESSOR--GIVE IT UP.
YOUR WARPED PSYCHOLOGICAL MIND GAMES AND DEMENTED THEATRICS WON'T WORK ON ME--!
CHURT
CHURT

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- ☐ AVE Avengers
- ☐ CAM Captain America
- ☐ FAN Fantastic Four
- ☐ IRM Iron Man

Marvel Heroes

- ☐ AFT Alpha Flight
- ☐ DDV Daredevil
- ☐ HFH Heroes For Hire
- ☐ ZAR Ka-Zar
- ☐ SIL Silver Surfer
- ☐ INC The Incredible Hulk
- ☐ BLT Thunderbolts

Spider-Man

- ☐ AMZ Amazing Spider-Man
- ☐ PPK Spectacular Spider-Man
- ☐ SSM Sensational Spider-Man
- ☐ SPI Spider-Man

The X-Men

- ☐ CAB Cable
- ☐ DDP Deadpool
- ☐ EXC Excalibur
- ☐ GEN Generation X
- ☐ XME Uncanny X-Men
- ☐ WOL Wolverine
- ☐ FAC X-Factor
- ☐ XFO X-Force
- ☐ MAN X-Man
- ☐ MEN X-Men

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H83MD7

Spectacular Spider-Man #257-258
J. M. DeMatteis • Luke Ross • Dan Green

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TYPICAL OF YOUR ARROGANCE. ALWAYS WILLING TO ACCEPT THE FACTS WHEN THEY SLANT IN YOUR FAVOR--
SOMETHING'S UP. MOVEMENTS GETTING SLUGGISH...
SWASH
OH, NO.
THE TIP OF THAT CROSSBOW BOLT MUST HAVE BEEN LACED WITH SOME SORT OF SLOW-ACTING KNOCKOUT DRUG--!
TIME'S RUNNING OUT. BODY'S ALREADY SLOWING ME DOWN...
KLENG!
...HAVE TO EITHER BEAT HIM...OR GET AWAY...SOON...BEFORE I PASS OUT...
SSSSS
KLATTER
--BUT NOT SO WILLING TO ACCEPT THEM WHEN THEY HIT TOO CLOSE TO HOME--
--UNN--!

SUPERPOWERS FOR SALE?!?

UCI

If You Love Comics Then The Next Five Minutes WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE!

I'm *a UCI SuperCollector! Codename: Kraft.*

What I am about to reveal will change the way you look at comic book collecting forever. By the time you finish reading this you will know exactly what to do to go from a mere 98lb. weakling comic shop customer to a .....

UCI SUPER COLLECTOR!

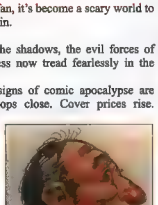
Let's face it comic fan, it's become a scary world to collect comic books in.

Once confined to the shadows, the evil forces of comic book darkness now tread fearlessly in the daylight!

All around the signs of comic apocalypse are evident. Comic shops close. Cover prices rise. Publishers and long time favorite heroes disappear from store shelves.

You love comics but you're frustrated. No one will listen To you! No one Will hear your pleas For help!

You scream, "Bring Back the fun! Make Comic collecting EASY again! Make it affordable. Respect my Intelligence! HELP ME!"



CLUB PRESIDENT
& PSYCHOPATHIC VIGILANTE
GARY S. KRAFT

Yes. You try your best. You reserve your favorite comics in advance! You are the first to your comic shop on the day new comics are released. Yet you still miss issues. Issues you may never see again. Issues essential to your collection! The hobby that hooked you in your earefree youth is but a shadow of it's former self.

Yes, perhaps you have already cut back on your "must buy" list. Perhaps you have even considered finding a new hobby! Yes you are beaten and bruised and you can't, nay, you won't take it any more! You are fed up with being a pawn in the comic wars!

Yes, yes! Go to the window! Open it wide and shout at the top of your lungs, "I'm MAD as HELL and I'm NOT going to take it ANYMORE!!!!!!"

WHAT WENT WRONG?

Free enterprise, the phenomenon that made America the greatest country in the world was exchanged for communism, regulation and the fast buck.

Comic shops once possessed the power to take their business elsewhere. But now only one distributor remains. Quite simply competition at the distributor level is dead. And when you remove competition you remove GROWTH! The rule of business and life is GROW OR DIE! Hence the depression that threatens the comic industry as a whole!

WELCOME TO THE NEW WORLD ORDER: MAY I HELP YOU?

It's easy to complain. But complaining in and of itself does little to remedy any crisis. What is required is SUPER POWERS! Yes, total control over one's destiny is the quickest route to happiness no matter what situation you find yourself in.

So as the comic world at large sinks deeper into the abyss, all across the globe concerned comic collectors are joining forces to combat the cloud of depression darkening our once happy and healthy hobby! But wait! Look up in the sky! It's a bird.. It's a plane! It's..... *THE UCI SUPERCOLLECTOR!*

ENTER UCI!

UCI stands for Universal Collectibles Inc. UCI is host to the Universal Collectibles Club. When you join UCI suddenly you are transformed from a mere customer of the stagnant comic shops into a UCI SUPERCOLLECTOR with powers far surpassing those of even your comic shop owner.

ASK YOURSELF THIS COMIC FAN

Which of the following SUPERPOWERS would you select if presented with the opportunity?

	YES	NO
SUPER SAVINGS	☐	☐
SUPER SELECTION	☐	☐
SUPER SERVICE	☐	☐
SUPER FAST DELIVERY	☐	☐
SUPER TIME TRAVEL	☐	☐
SUPER INTELLIGENCE	☐	☐

If you're like me one Super Power could never be enough! If you're like me you probably checked every box YES! Well then odds are you are a prime candidate for UCI SUPERPOWERS! Prepare yourself as the *COSMIC FORCE OF FREE ENTERPRISE TRANSFORMS YOU INTO A GOD!! YOU NOW WIELD THE POWER U-C-I !!!!*

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SUPER FAST DELIVERY.....

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MANY MORE SERVICES INCLUDED BUT I'M RUNNING OUT OF ROOM COMIC FAN!

But don't take my word for it. All membership fees proudly backed by UCI's 90 Day No Questions Asked Money Back Guarantee! Since 1992 UCI has been creating an elite force of SUPERCOLLECTORS! Don't you think it's time you JOINED THE UCI TEAM?!?!? We're ready to help but YOU have to take the FIRST STEP!

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POWERS ARE FIZZLING OUT...
--OR WHEN THEY THREATEN TO EXPOSE THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CONTAMINATED GENE POOL FROM WHICH YOU SPRUNG!
HUH?!
FOR INSTANCE--TAKE YOUR DESERVEDLY DECEASED BROTHER ANDREAS AND HIS SINFUL WAYS...
KERSHH
LEAVE THAT SCUM OUT OF THIS! ANDREAS' RELATION TO ME IS EMBARRASSMENT I'D JUST AS SOON FORGET!
SMAK
-UMMF!- I CAN SEE WHY HIS NEO-NAZI TENDENCIES ARE A PRIME EXAMPLE OF THE OLD ADAGE ABOUT THE APPLE NOT FALLING FAR FROM THE TREE--
SSSSS
--WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?
MUDT
WHAT?! WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?!

THOUGH MAVERICK'S CONCENTRATION SLIPS FOR ONLY A MOMENT-- IT IS A COSTLY ERROR.
I TAKE IT BY YOUR REACTION THAT YOUR BROTHER NEVER TOLD YOU THE TRUTH ABOUT YOUR PARENTS.
UUURKK--!
WHUUMMF
AND THE MOMENTARY DISTRACTION-- COMBINED WITH THE INCREASING EFFECTS OF THE POISON COURSING THROUGH HIS SYSTEM--
--DEPRIVE HIM OF ANY POSSIBLE CHANCE OF VICTORY OR ESCAPE.
PARALYZING AGENTS... TAKING EFFECT...
WHAK
THOWK
SLAM
ABOUT HOW THEIR DEATHS WERE NOT AN ACCIDENT-- BUT MORE LIKE A SUMMARY EXECUTION BY PARTIES UNKNOWN.
A FORM OF RETRIBUTION-- AND FITTING PUNISHMENT FOR THEIR PAST CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY.
THRASHAK

FADING FAST... AND NOW I CAN'T EVEN MOVE...
OH WELL. YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE ME FOR SPOILING THE SURPRISE.
YEAH... RIGHT... YOU WORM...
...SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE...!
NEXT ISSUE:
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SPIDER-MAN: THE MANGA *10

A fake Spidey is tearing up Tokyo! YU KOMORI – the real Spidey – wants to do something about it, but he's said "sayonara" to crime-fighting! By RYOICHI IKEGAMI!

STAR TREK: THE UNTOLD VOYAGES *3 of 5

McCOY is finally reunited with his estranged daughter – but a figure from the good doctor's past threatens this happy reunion! By GLENN GREENBERG and MICHAEL COLLINS.

2099 MANIFEST DESTINY *1

Is this the end of the 2099 universe – or a bold new beginning? By LEN KAMINSKI and MIKE McKONE!

ALPHA FLIGHT *9

ALPHA FLIGHT is flung deep into the bowels of the sinister PROMETHEUS PIT! By STEVEN T SEAGLE and ANTHONY WINN!

FURY/AGENT 13 *1 of 2

SHARON CARTER is looking for NICK FURY to pay him back for stranding her behind enemy lines -- and when she finds him, there's going to be heck to pay! By TERRY KAVANAGH and RAMON BERNADO!

IRON MAN *4

TONY STARK and the world's top executives are gathered on an island which happens to be a dormant volcano! This is a bad time for the return of FIREBRAND! By KURT BUSIEK and SEAN CHEN!

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY *520

Hannibal King is hired by a beautiful woman to investigate the murder of her husband – and ends up in the clutches of a vampire cabal! By MARV WOLFMAN and KARL KERSCHL!

MARVEL ADVENTURES *14

HULK vs. THE JUGGERNAUT! What more do you need to know?! By RALPH MACCHIO and ANDY KUHN!

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN *434

PETER PARKER assumes an all-new hero-ic persona! Make way for RICOCHET! But beware the sting of the deadly BLACK TARANTULA! By TOM DeFALCO and JOE BENNETT!

GENERATION X *36

Get ready to be super-amalgamated, unless the Gen-X kids can save the day! Plus: who the heck is DIRT-NAP the rat? By LARRY HAMA and TERRY DODSON

X FACTOR *145

GREYSTONE encounters a young boy who will grow up to become a mutant-hunting hound! Can this dark future be changed? By HOWARD MACKIE and DUNCAN ROULEAU!

ITEM! For years, fans of the AMAZING SPIDER MAN have eagerly awaited a big-budget film about their favorite wall-crawler, directed by superstar director JAMES CAMERON -- the man who was at the helm of the *Titanic*, revealed some *True Lies* and unleashed the Terminator! Sadly, production of the film has been held up by one legal hassle after another! But there's good news for Spider-Fans -- Cameron recently appeared on the HOWARD STERN radio show and announced that he still intends to make the Spider-Man movie, as soon as all the legal problems are resolved! Cameron's choice to play PETER PARKER? None other than LEONARDO DICAPRIO who starred in Cameron's previous magnum opus, *Titanic*! With that kind of talent on tap, it's clear that the SPIDEY movie will be a blockbuster! (Just watch out for those ice-bergs, Web Head!)

ITEM! Get ready to go back to the future, Marvelites! Next week we once again enter the far-out, futuristic world of 2099 in the pages of 2099 MANIFEST DESTINY, a 48-page bookshelf format one shot by the team of LEN KAMINSKI, MIKE McKONE, and MARK McKENNA! You'll meet MOON KNIGHT 2099, learn the origin of the FANTASTIC FOUR 2099 and witness the resurrection of one of Earth's greatest heroes! Join MIGUEL O'HARA the former SPIDER MAN 2099, as he attempts to unite the future Marvel heroes in the final battle for humanity! After this story the 2099 universe will never be the same again!

ITEM! NICK FURY is missing and presumed dead, but S.H.I.E.L.D. agent SHARON CARTER, A.K.A. AGENT 13, is determined to find the famed superspy and prove that he's still alive—just so she can kill him again! It seems that FURY once left Sharon behind enemy lines to die and now Agent 13 is looking for some payback! It all happens in the pages of the two-issue limited series, FURY/AGENT 13, by TERRY KAVANAGH RAMON BERNADO and IAN AIKEN! Sharon's search reveals some shocking secrets about the history of S.H.I.E.L.D. and uncovers a side of ol' Nick we've never seen before! But if CAPTAIN AMERICA's girlfriend finds her man, 13 will be an unlucky number for Fury!

ITEM! As you eagerly await the BLADE movie, here's another vampire tale you can sink your teeth into! JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #520 presents a horrifying two-parter starring HANNIBAL KING, the vampire detective, written by King's creator, "Marvelous" MARV WOLFMAN! The art is by KARL KERSCHL, who brought his distinctive style to the DAILY BUGLE Limited Series! The decidedly different story finds Hannibal hired by a beautiful woman to track down her husband's killers - but those killers turn out to be the blood-sucking undead! This time, Hannibal may have bitten off more than he can chew!

ITEM! A new generation of artistic excellence begins in GENERATION X #38, as we welcome aboard new penciler TERRY DODSON! If you remember his power-packed pencils from the STORM Limited Series, you know you're in for a treat! Terry joins regular writer LARRY HAMA for a riotous tale in which the Gen-X kids try to save the universe from amalgamation! This issue also features Marvel's weirdest character since HOWARD THE DUCK – get ready to shake hands with DIRT-NAP the rat! And hold on to your cheese!

STAN'S SOAPBOX!

Hi, Heroes!

A kid named Joe told me recently that someone had seen him reading a comic book and put him down for it. Joe wasn't sure how to respond. Although such episodes are becoming increasingly rare because most people now recognize the entertainment value of comics, I'd like to reprint part of a column I had written about that subject years ago, and I hope it'll be as relevant today as it was back in the '60s ..

Comic books are a medium of communication, just like television and motion pictures. All three employ words and pictures, and all must be judged on their individual merits. A story is a story, whether presented between two covers or on a screen. If the words have dramatic impact, if the pictures are visually appealing, if the theme grabs you emotionally, then it is certainly worthy of a reader's attention. However, if the quality is lacking, then it rates little consideration. Isn't that equally true of a TV program, a stage show, a motion picture, opera, or any other form of entertainment? All we comic book creators ask is that our product be judged on the basis of quality, a quality which we sincerely believe is comparable to that found in any other form of media.

Boy, am I glad I dug that up – it got me halfway through this issue's Soapbox! Now, let's segue to our first letter, from Keith Previc of New Cumberland, PA, who asks:

"Is it easier to 'break in' to the comics, and Marvel in particular, as a writer or an artist? If there's a difference in the demand, why is that?"

Artists are probably more in demand than writers, because there are less of them. As for "breaking in," it's easier for an artist (assuming the talent is there), because an editor can usually see if the artist has what it takes by quickly glancing at his or her artwork. In the case of a writer, the editor must read page after page of samples and, even after that, it's still difficult to predict how the writer will do on any given story.

And we'll wrap it up with this query from Andy Stout of Chapin, SC:

"Did any AMAZING FANTASY mags before #15 take place in the Marvel Universe?"

Not that I can remember, Andy. (See? I can be brief at times – though it's tough!)

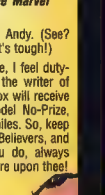
Now, before turning you loose, I feel duty-bound to remind you that the writer of every letter printed in the Soapbox will receive a practically priceless 1998 model No-Prize, guaranteed for the first 50,000 miles. So, keep those questions coming, O True Believers, and wherever you go, whatever you do, always remember – the eyes of Marvel are upon thee!

Excelsior!

Stan

Stan Lee

Now for our award-winning address. "Stan's Soapbox," c/o BULLPEN BULLETINS, Marvel Comics, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. Feel free to hum it. It's the "Star-Spangled Banner" of Comicdom!



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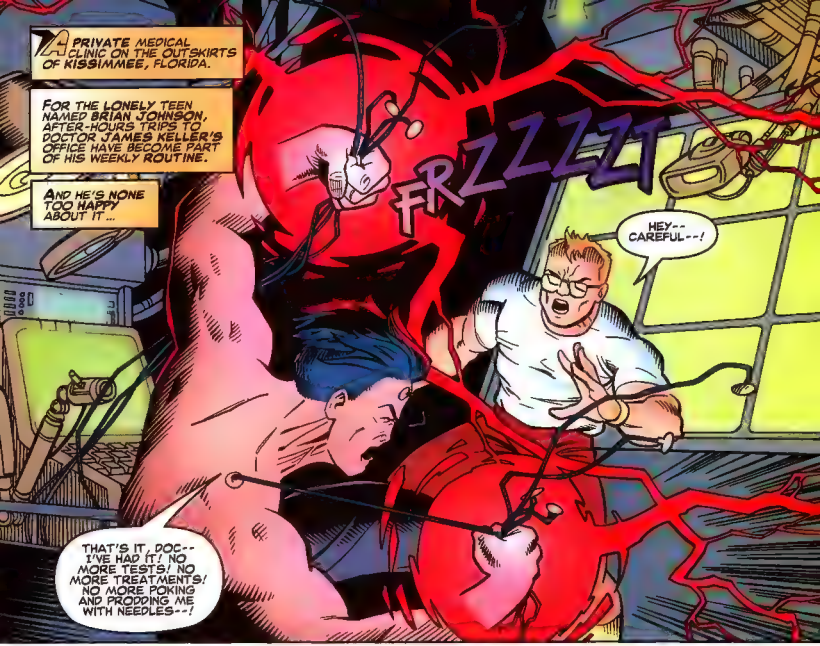

A PRIVATE MEDICAL CLINIC ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA.
FOR THE LONELY TEEN NAMED BRIAN JOHNSON, AFTER-HOURS TRIPS TO DOCTOR JAMES KELLER'S OFFICE HAVE BECOME PART OF HIS WEEKLY ROUTINE.
AND HE'S NONE TOO HAPPY ABOUT IT...
FRZZZZT
HEY--- CAREFUL--!
THAT'S IT, DOC-- I'VE HAD IT! NO MORE TESTS! NO MORE TREATMENTS! NO MORE POKING AND PRODING ME WITH NEEDLES--!

EASY TARGETS

JORGE GONZALEZ
WRITER

LEO FERNANDEZ
PENCILER

ANDREW PEPOY
INKER

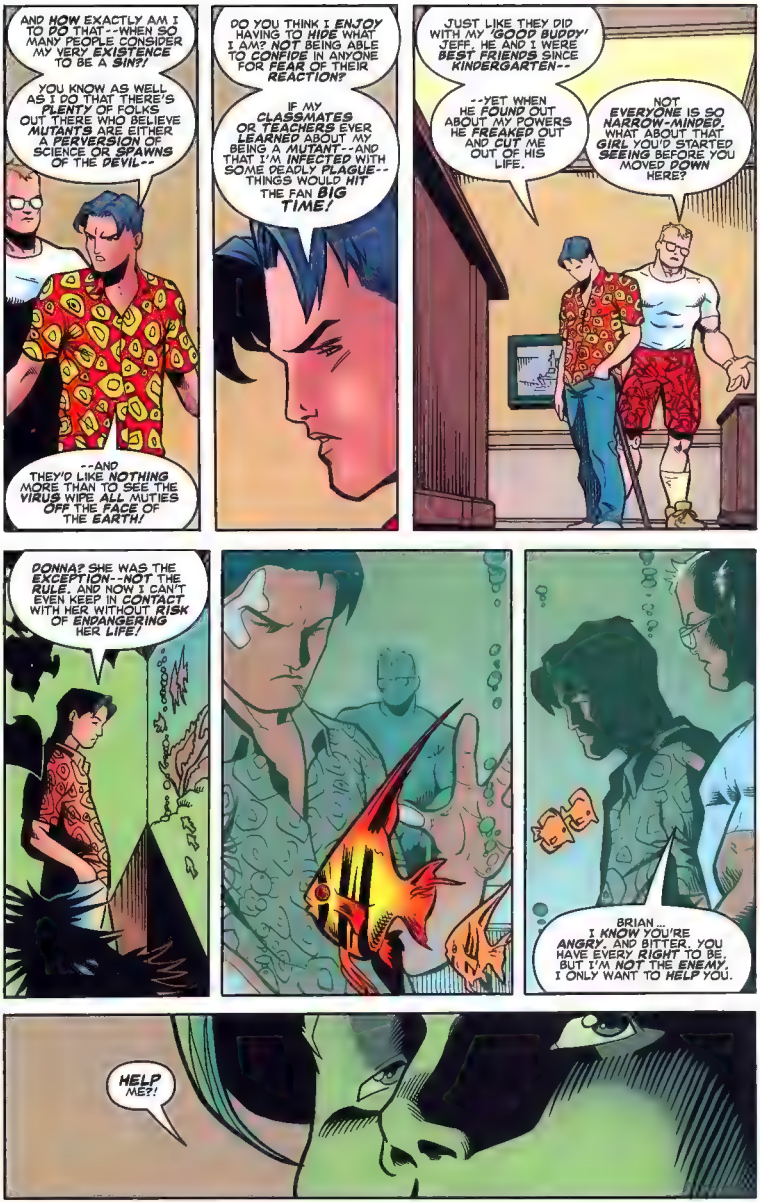
CHRIS ELIOPOULOS
BARTON CALLIGRAPHY
LETTERER

KEVIN SOMERS
COLORIST

FRANK PITTARESE
EDITOR

BOB HARRAS
EDITOR IN CHIEF

I DON'T GET IT, BRIAN. WHY ARE YOU BEING SO HOSTILE?
I THOUGHT WE SETTLED ALL THIS DURING YOUR LAST VISIT. A DEFEATIST OUTLOOK ISN'T GOING TO DO YOU ANY GOOD.
SAVE YOURSELF THE PEP TALK, DOC. I MEAN, GET REAL--THE ODDS ARE I'LL BE PUSHING UP PAISIES BY THE TIME I'M TWENTY-ONE, RIGHT?
SO WHAT'S THE POINT?
THE POINT, YOUNG MAN, IS THAT IF YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF PROPERLY, YOU STAND A MUCH BETTER CHANCE OF STICKING AROUND LONG ENOUGH--
--SO THAT THE DAY A CURE FOR YOUR CONDITION IS DEVELOPED YOU CAN MAKE A FULL RECOVERY.
YEAH, RIGHT. TALK ABOUT A PIPE DREAM!
LOOK, DOC--I'M NOT STUPID.
AS LONG AS THE MASSES CONSIDER THE LEGACY VIRUS A MUTANT-SPECIFIC DISEASE, THE GOVERNMENT'S NOT GONNA TAKE ANY REAL STEPS TO TRY TO FIND A CURE.
THEY'LL JUST DRAG THEIR FEET--LIKE THEY DO WITH EVERYTHING ELSE. BUSINESS AS USUAL...
YOU DON'T KNOW THAT FOR CERTAIN. AND ANYWAY, THAT'S NO EXCUSE TO GIVE UP HOPE.
I'M NOT SAYING IT'S GOING TO BE EASY--BUT YOU SHOULD AT LEAST TRY TO MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.


AND HOW EXACTLY AM I TO DO THAT--WHEN SO MANY PEOPLE CONSIDER MY VERY EXISTENCE TO BE A SIN?!
YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT THERE'S PLENTY OF FOLKS OUT THERE WHO BELIEVE MUTANTS ARE EITHER A PERVERSION OF SCIENCE OR SPAWNS OF THE DEVIL--
--AND THEY'D LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN TO SEE THE VIRUS WIPE ALL MUTIES OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH!
DO YOU THINK I ENJOY HAVING TO HIDE WHAT I AM? NOT BEING ABLE TO CONFIDE IN ANYONE FOR FEAR OF THEIR REACTION?
IF MY CLASSMATES OR TEACHERS EVER LEARNED ABOUT MY BEING A MUTANT--AND THAT I'M INFECTED WITH SOME DEADLY PLAGUE--THINGS WOULD HIT THE FAN BIG TIME!
JUST LIKE THEY DID WITH MY 'GOOD BUDDY' JEFF. HE AND I WERE BEST FRIENDS SINCE KINDERGARTEN--
--YET WHEN HE FOUND OUT ABOUT MY POWERS HE FREAKED OUT AND CUT ME OUT OF HIS LIFE.
NOT EVERYONE IS SO NARROW-MINDED. WHAT ABOUT THAT GIRL YOU'D STARTED SEEING BEFORE YOU MOVED DOWN HERE?
DONNA? SHE WAS THE EXCEPTION--NOT THE RULE. AND NOW I CAN'T EVEN KEEP IN CONTACT WITH HER WITHOUT RISK OF ENDANGERING HER LIFE!
BRIAN... I KNOW YOU'RE ANGRY. AND BITTER. YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO BE. BUT I'M NOT THE ENEMY. I ONLY WANT TO HELP YOU.
HELP ME?!

HMMPH. THAT'S A HOOT. I APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORTS, DOC-- BUT YOU CAN'T HELP ME.
NO ONE CAN ...
POOR KID. HE'S IN A WORLD OF HURT. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE'S LITTLE I CAN DO TO HELP HIM UNTIL I'VE EARNED HIS TRUST...
... WE GO IN, RAID THE MEDICINE CABINET FOR SELECTED GOODIES--THEN HEAD FOR SALLY'S PARTY.
WHAT IF THE DOCTOR'S STILL IN THERE? WE COULD GET CAUGHT!
SPEED'S RIGHT. I DON'T WANNA SPEND NO MORE TIME IN JUVENILE HALL--!
TRUST ME, DUDES. THE DOC'S A CRIPPLE. WHETHER HE'S HERE OR NOT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE. HE'S AN EASY TARGET!
I'M SOLD. LET'S DO IT!
SHRKK
MAVERICK WENT TO A LOT OF TROUBLE TO HOOK ME UP WITH DOC KELLER. I SHOULDN'T HAVE BLOWN HIM OFF LIKE THAT.
NOW I FEEL LIKE A HEEL. MAYBE I SHOULD APOLOGIZE...

HEY--WHAT'S GOING ON?! SOMEONE'S BREAKING INTO THE CLINIC!
WAITASEC! I RECOGNIZE THOSE GOONS FROM SCHOOL! THAT'S MARCUS RENFIELD AND HIS TWO LACKEYS--DICE AND SPEED.
THOSE LOSERS WON'T THINK TWICE ABOUT HARMING THE DOC IF HE GETS IN THEIR WAY...
WHAK
KASHTT
AARGH--!
I'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING! BUT WHAT?!
BY THE TIME I REACH A PHONE, CALL THE POLICE AND WAIT FOR 'EM TO GET HERE--IT'LL BE TOO LATE TO HELP THE DOC.
HMMM. THERE ARE ONLY THREE OF 'EM. I COULD PROBABLY TAKE 'EM OUT SOLO WITH MY POWERS...
...BUT I CAN'T DO THAT WITHOUT EXPOSING MYSELF AS A MUTANT AND REVEALING MY IDENTITY.
SO WHAT DO I DO?!
TO BE CONTINUED...

NORTH DECODED

Dear *NORTH DECODED*,

I have liked Maverick since his guest-appearances in the X-MEN and WOLVERINE. I especially love his own monthly series. The story and subplots are great, the art is terrific and the colors seem to match perfectly. Not to mention the way you answer the letters in North Decoded! Anyway, those guest appearances from ALPHA FLIGHT and SABRETOOTH and all are great, but I'd like it if the characters Hammer and Sickle would develop a little more. Until the next issue.

Peter Teffer
(Address withheld by request)

Ask and ye shall receive, Peter. Last issue the Confessor rescued Sickle from prison for Ivan. In the issue that you just read, Maverick is kicked around by the Confessor, and only we know what Ivan has in store for him. But of course we're not going to tell!

Dear *NORTH DECODED*,

At long last Elena has gotten her revenge against Sabretooth--but was it worth it?! Now, she's in a coma—possibly dying— and it looks like Maverick's powers are out of control. What does this mean? If Elena dies, will Maverick completely lose control? Will his Legacy Virus return? I'm guessing that, since Elena "cured" him, and she's in a coma (or dead), there's nothing left to "anchor" Maverick's health. If that's the case, Mav's gonna have a hard time of things the next time he has to go into battle. Hopefully, it won't be up against someone as powerful as Sabretooth because, quite frankly, I don't think he'd win.

Meanwhile, it looks like Chris Bradley (or is that Brian Johnson?) is also having some trouble with his powers. I hope that doesn't mean that his days are numbered, since he's one of the best things about this book. I really like the idea that he's, for lack of a better term, a "New Mutant," and would really like to see him get better and possibly join Generation X.

Until then, though, let's see more of Maverick and Chris together. Maybe Maverick should take an Issue or two to train Chris in using his powers. It doesn't seem like Chris would make a good sidekick, mostly because Maverick doesn't need one, but it might be cool to see Chris take on a super-heroic identity of his own and join Gen X.

Whether that happens or not, I'll be sticking around to see what happens.

David Reece
Brooklyn, NY

We're guessing that Elena would not think it was worth it, David. Maverick is about to learn the hard way what that means. It would appear that he burns the skin right off his hands every time he powers up. Just a minor side effect, cause if we know Jorge, and we do, it's only going to get worse before it gets better! In this very issue you found out what happens when Maverick faced the Confessor and man it was not pretty! We will continue to show you the evolution of Brian, uh Chris, uh, whatever! He will become a super hero in his own time, which may be a tad faster than he wanted! Join Gen X, huh? Now that's an interesting proposition! We'll just have to see if Emma wants a mutant with the Legacy Virus running around the campus.

Dear *NORTH DECODED*,

This series is phenomenal. After reading MAVERICK #1 I couldn't help but write in. Before I get started I have to congratulate you on the spectacular cover of MAVERICK #1. I was there buying a recent issue of WOLVERINE when I saw the MAVERICK cover standing out among all the other comics. It's the coolest series out! I picked up the issue and have been hooked since.

I was glad to see Wolverine in MAVERICK #4 and then Sabretooth in issue #6. Maybe you could have some appearances from the rest of the Weapon-X team. I was thinking the merc with a mouth, Deadpool, would be a great addition. I'd like to see the two of them go at it in a battle or even side by side against a more powerful enemy. The characters in MAVERICK are a nice combo. I like how Isabel Ferguson supplies Maverick with all of his weapons. It's nice to see Maverick has friends like Chris Bradley.

Jim Cheung's art is fantastic! Jorge Gonzalez's story really grabs my attention, along with Andrew Pepoy's inking! The shading really has an impact on the illustrations. I also like Kevin Somers' coloring. You guys make a perfect team. What mainly grabbed my attention was Jorge Gonzalez. I've seen his writing in many other Marvel books like WHAT IF?!, X-MEN UNLIMITED, and the UNCANNY X-MEN ANNUAL '98. I have always appreciated his work.

Naturally, I have a ton of question. Will Maverick ever be able to see into the future now that the Legacy Virus has gone dormant? Who exactly created the Legacy Virus? Was it Stryfe, and if so what comics did it happen in? Will John Wraith or Omega Red appear in MAVERICK anytime soon? Since the Shiva Project came after Wolverine and Sabretooth, will it come after Maverick? I know Maverick appeared in X-MEN #5-7,10,11, X-MEN UNLIMITED #15, WOLVERINE #60-64, 67, 87, WOLVERINE '95 and in the MAVERICK One-Shot. Are there any others? Once again I have to congratulate you on the coolest series ever. Keep up the good work and until Sabretooth is Maverick's father MAKE MINE MARVEL!

Jason Castillo
(Address withheld by request)

Yet another request for Deadpool. You join a growing list, Jason! We'll have to ask Joe Kelly and Jorge Gonzalez if they can play nice. Man if you guys keep complimenting Jorge he's not going to get through the hallowed gates of Marvel without some Crisco put on his head! Maverick's powers are still haywire so he just may get a glimpse into the future but we won't say when or what. Nothing like being ambiguous to really get you guys going! The Legacy Virus was created by Stryfe and released in the last part of the EXECUTIONER'S SONG storyline, issue #18 of X-FORCE. John Wraith and Omega Red showed up in the MAVERICK One-Shot. Since Maverick stayed working for the government and didn't go rogue, the Shiva Project probably won't be beating down his door anytime soon, but you never know! You have all the appearances of our hallowed character, nice job!

Dear *NORTH DECODED*,

I just picked up issue #7 of MAVERICK. It was the first issue of MAVERICK I ever read. Since I have not read the six issues previous to this, I was very confused, but intrigued. Even though I was confused, I still had a sense of what was going on because of the superb writing. The art was good and I found the action sequences well-thought out. I like the subplot about the Bradleys. It gives me, a reader, a story I think that is closer to reality that I can relate to. While I'm not a super-powered mutant, I am a high school student who likes to read comic books.

I do have one complaint: Your gatefold really did not explain who Elena was. I think if a character is in an issue, they should have their own entry in the gatefold and not just a little note in the summary. I think I will continue to read MAVERICK from now on and I hope that it lasts a long time.

Jeffrey Vaughn
(Address withheld by request)

Thanks, Jeffrey! Sorry to hear you were confused but we guess that you got along just fine. The reason that Elena didn't have a spot in the gatefold is because she wasn't integral to the story. Her backstory was covered, though, in the "What happened before" section of that gatefold. We're not lying–check it out! And now that we've converted you to the Legions of Maverites, go out and bring in some more buddies!

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